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ABSTRACT

For a public speaking instructor, his involvement in forensics as a graduate student led to the use of cameras as an instructional tool. Video technology can be used in the classroom to maximize overall student performance. All graded speeches were videotaped and evaluated in class, which allowed students an extra opportunity to view their peers, as they were required to write extensive critiques of all performances. Technological advances make it easier to place smaller camcorders, tripods and microphones in cramped classrooms. The videotapes also help students improve their presentations by being able to watch them over and over again in the privacy of their homes or dorm rooms. Students also occasionally use short video clips as visual aids in persuasive or informative speeches. Video should be a component of public speaking courses to enhance student improvement. (RS)

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"The Use of Video as a Performance and Evaluation Instrument in Public Speaking Courses."

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I have taught the introductory higher education public speaking course more than 30 times. My teaching style as a tenured faculty member at Southern Arkansas University is much more polished than when I began in 1983 as a green teaching assistant at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. During my two years at UNLV, I took a great deal of pride in writing, and then typing, extensive critiques of major presentations. However, the time spent on each evaluation took me away from watching each speech in its entirety. Since my teaching emphasis was broadcast journalism, I felt video technology could be incorporated into the classroom in order to maximize overall student performance and enhance my ability as a speech instructor.

Using cameras as an instructional speech tool came from my involvement in forensics as a graduate student. As the associate director of forensics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, I occasionally videotaped practice debate sessions with old black and white cameras. This strategy appeared to pay off, as the UNLV Debate and Forensics Squad won more than 100 awards in two years, including Brady Lee

Garrison Newcomers Award in 1983-84 as the top-ranked first-year Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA) program in the nation.

Videotaping speeches began in earnest in 1985 in my initial teaching position as a visiting instructor at Purdue University, Calumet. At the time, portable video technology made for a less obtrusive classroom atmosphere. Students were slowly inoculated into the idea of perceiving a camera as a tool which could result in positive improvement. All graded speeches were videotaped and evaluated in class. This allowed students an extra opportunity to view their peers, as they were required to write extensive critiques of all performances.

From this small beginning, the idea of maintaining a personal video speech archive was born. One T-120 or T-160 videotape could recorded six or eight hours of speeches at EP speed. At Purdue University, Calumet, cameras were attached to VHS or 3/4 inch video cassette recorders and placed on movable carts. By the time I arrived at Southern Arkansas University in 1987, advances in technology made it

easier to place smaller camcorders, tripods and microphones in cramped classrooms.

This is the tenth consecutive academic year in which video has been used in my public speaking courses. Since time constraints make it impossible to show entire videotaped presentations in class, students are given an option which has the potential to significantly aid their delivery and organizational skills. As director of the SAU broadcast journalism emphasis, I have extensive experience in electronic news gathering and post-production editing. Our facilities contain both VHS and Super-VHS camcorders and editing equipment. I urge students to bring me new, extra high grade videotapes on which I can dub their graded speeches. They can improve from watching their presentations over and over again in the privacy of their homes or dorm rooms. In addition, the videotapes serve as unique historical documents chronicling a segment of their academic careers.

Corollary video technology used by students has become increasingly frequent in my public speaking courses. Short clips from home camcorder footage or professional videos are occasionally used as visual aids in persuasive or

informative speeches. My only video rule is to keep the clip short, ideally no more than 30 seconds. It should serve as a device to aid the audience in visualizing a subject in the same manner as a poster board. My summer 1994 course saw the first instance of multimedia being used by a student to illustrate his informative speech topics. Advances in learning technology and information systems will make this strategy more common in the near future.

The use of video in the speech education classroom is more accepted now than when I began my teaching career. Faculty must stay abreast of technological advancements in order to give their students the best education possible. It is exciting to consider that interactive instructional speech technology is now being used at many institutions. I do not believe there is one "right" way to teach an introductory higher education public speaking course. I do believe, however, that video should be a component of any course in order to enhance student improvement.